

one-way mirror. If direct observation is not possible, you could interview research participants about your assistants' behavior after explaining your supervisory role or by using a questionnaire. Make these assessments fairly frequently at the outset of data collection and periodically thereafter.

When discussing your observations with your assistants, be sure that your feedback is constructive. Be polite, point out what they did well in addition to any problems you noted, and give them specific guidelines for improving their performance. Always bear in mind that in this situation you are a teacher as well as a researcher, so you have an obligation to provide your assistants with an effective learning experience. Box 16.1 provides some guidelines for supervising research assistants.

### **Box 16.1 Guidelines for Supervising Research Assistants**

- Set clear goals and objectives, such as the number of data collection sessions each assistant will conduct during a semester.
- Set clear expectations for behavior, such as dress, punctuality, and interactions with research participants.
- Clearly define each person's role in the research process, such as who collects data, who enters data, who analyzes data, who supervises whom, and so forth.
- Compile a laboratory manual that explains policies and procedures, give one to each assistant, and hold a meeting to check their understanding of its contents and to answer questions. Malfese et al. (1996) provide a sample outline for a lab manual.
- Have a system for communicating with and among assistants. A periodic meeting can be very useful.
- Being a researcher will be a new (and perhaps stressful) role for most assistants, so monitor them carefully for signs of uncertainty or stress and provide appropriate guidance.
- Be alert for signs of conflicts between assistants, and take immediate action to resolve them.
- Provide assistants with periodic performance feedback so that they know what they are doing correctly and incorrectly. Provide corrective feedback tactfully.

Source: Adapted from Malfese et al. (1996).

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## **Using the Internet to Collect Data**

Researchers are constantly looking for ways to collect data from a wide range of participants at minimal cost and the Internet (or World Wide Web) offers many possibilities for doing so. As Birnbaum (2001) notes, researchers can collect online data from participants who come to their laboratory or from people all over the world. Researchers are using online data collection procedures to answer an increasingly wide range of research questions. One common approach is to adapt materials developed for offline research into an online study; for example, researchers use this *translational approach* to convert paper and pencil personality measures to online surveys (Skitka & Sargis, 2005, 2006). For this type of Web-based research, potential participants are directed to a site where they see a page